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A. S. WATSON & Co., Ltd.

THE HONGKONG DISPENSARY,

HONG KONG, 29th October, 1888.

The Hongkong Telegraph

HONGKONG, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1888.

TELEGRAMS.

(Reuter.)

FRANCE.

LONDON, November 26th.

Recent events in France have caused very serious animosity between parties, especially the Boulangist and Republican.

SUAKIN.

A British infantry regiment homeward bound has been landed at Suakin to assist the garrison.

LOCAL AND GENERAL.

THE P. & O. Company's steamer *Venelia*, from Bombay, left Singapore for this port at noon today.

A GAME at football under Association Rules will be played at Causeway Bay to-morrow, the 29th inst., commencing at 4.15 sharp.

THE Ocean Steamship Co.'s steamer *Anchises*, from Liverpool, left Singapore this morning, and is due here on the 5th proximo.

Mr. Wodehouse will hold an inquiry on Saturday into the circumstances attending the shooting of a coolie at the rifle range, Kowloon, during the Rifle Association meeting on the 10th inst.

THE Vicar of Fohkien has been thoroughly overhauling the Yamen in Fochow, and making great alterations in the officers, in order to check the "squeezing," which had become a public scandal.

We are glad to see that in the General Orders for the Police Inspector Stanton is gazetted for a second-class medal, in recognition of his bravery and decisive action in recapturing the runaway convicts in September.

A CERTAIN gallant captain of our acquaintance who shall be nameless has been going about like a raging lion, seeking somebody to devour. He says he will have blood—nothing but blood will wash out the insult. Rub it in hard, George, while you are on the war-path.

ACCORDING to the Fochow Echo tonnage is very scarce at present, steamers for London readily commanding as much as 50/- per ton. The steamer *Kaitow*, which left Fochow for London on the 20th November with a full cargo, had to shut out a considerable quantity of tea.The total amount of the subsidy to be sent to Peking by all the provinces from the land tax and salt duties during the present year, according to the *Peking Gazette*, is £1,700,000. Of this, the Canton Salt revenue was to furnish a sum of £1,200,000, and was at the same time to provide £1,500,000 for the expenses of the Imperial Household. £1,500,000 of the above amounts have been already forwarded, and a further instalment of £1,600,000 is now being remitted, together with £1,850 to cover the cost of carriage, diffcult in weight, and maintenance allowance to officials of the Board.

At the sanitary Board meeting to-morrow.

Mr. Ede, pursuant to notice, will move—That a Committee be appointed to frame By-Laws under Sub-section 13 of Section 13 of "The Public Health Ordinance" and to report to the Board on the subject of overcrowding as early as possible.

Papers on the subject of the licensing of Public Latrines.

Papers concerning the licensing of private depots for the keeping of Cattle imported into the Colony for the purpose of being slaughtered.

By-Laws under Sub-section 24 of Section 13 of "The Public Health Ordinance" relating to Infectious Diseases.

THIS interesting despatch by the Empress Dowager is published in the *Peking Gazette* of the 5th November. (1) Since the Emperor revereously entered upon the succession to the great patri-mony he has been gradually growing up to manhood, and it is fitting that a person of high character should be selected to be his Consort and assist him in the duties of the palace, to the end that the high position of Empress may be fittingly filled and the Emperor supported in the pursuit of virtue. The choice having fallen upon Yeh-ho-na, the daughter of Deputy Lieutenant General Kuei Hsing, a maiden of virtuous character and becoming and dignified demeanour, we command that she be appointed Empress. (2) We command that Tsa-ta be aged 15; the daughter of Chang Hui, a former Vice-President of a Board, be raised to the position of concubine of the 4th degree, and that Tsa-ta be aged 13, another daughter of the same officer, be appointed a concubine of the same degree.

MESSRS. Adamson, Bell & Co., agents for the Canadian-Pacific Line, inform us that the steamship *Albany* arrived at Vancouver from Yokohama on the 26th inst.

We are requested to state that the Tramway Company will run extra cars at 9 p.m. on Friday and at 1.30 a.m. on Saturday next for the convenience of those attending the St. Andrew's Ball.

SAYS the *Fochow Echo*:—We regret to learn that the firm of Messrs. E. D. Sassoon & Co., opium merchants, intend to close their agency at this port by the end of the year, owing to their inability to compete with the native importers, who, we hear, can afford to sell and are always selling their drugs at five to ten dollars cheaper than foreign importers can, owing to their trading expenses being so very small.

We take the following from Messrs. Wheelock & Co.'s market report of the 23rd inst.:—Since date of our last report, 9th instant, steam rates to London by all lines have advanced. Our market may be considered fairly good, but there being a great scarcity of tonnage, a little business has been done here. The fixtures for the coal carrying trade between Nagasaki and this have chiefly been done in Japan. The demand for the Newchwang-Swallow trade has almost ceased, the season is drawing to a close. For London, via usual ports of call and Suez Canal. The departure of the Mutual Line steamship *Kaitow* on the 16th instant has left the berth entirely to the Mails and Holt's, the former now booking cargo at 60s. Holt's steamship *Orestes* arrived yesterday and is fully engaged for the week ending Wednesday the 28th inst., and will be followed by the same company's steamer *Ajias*, leaving on the 4th proximo, rate 55s. per ton. For New York, via usual ports of call and Suez Canal. The *s.s. Euphrates* is fully engaged at 55s. and will be dispatched to-day, direct; the Ben Line *s.s. Benader* follows, arriving here about the end of the month with a portion of cargo from Japan, her rate will be 60s. per ton. The Norwegian barque *Isabel* is still loading and will probably get away early next month. The *s.s. Empire*, due any day, chartered at home, will take her place at the advanced rate of 30s. per ton of 40 cwt. Quotations are—Newchwang to Swatow, 25 Mex. cents per picul, steam, no enquiry. Chetow to Swatow, 13 Mex. cents per picul, small demand. Nagasaki to Shanghai, \$1.85; per ton of Coal, not for steamers; 1.20 ex ship, for sailing vessels. Settlements during the fortnight: *Chatsaubrand*, British barque, 410 tons register, Keelung to Ningpo, \$3.00 per ton coal, 14 day days. *Johanna*, German steamer, 4.8 tons register, Nagasaki to Shanghai, \$1.80 per ton coal, quick dispatch. No disengaged vessels in port.

TWO important cases were disposed of this week at the Supreme Court in Criminal Sessions, and although the charge in either case was that of murder, the issues were entirely different, and the verdicts diverged to the fullest extremes of conviction and acquittal respectively. The convicts charged with the murder of turnkey Pereira were found not guilty, whilst the Little Hongkong murderers were convicted on an identical charge, and inconsequently sentenced to death. We do not propose to enquire into the intrinsic value in which capital punishment is held by the Chinese criminal classes, both as a retribution and as a deterrent for we are intimately convinced that death is not taken either as a punishment or as a deterrent by the adherents of fatalism, among whom the native criminal classes stand conspicuous. Confining ourselves to the verdicts returned in the two cases of murder tried at the Supreme Court, we think the discrepancy is hardly justified in view of the evidence adduced and the circumstances attending both cases.

We would opine either for a verdict of wilful murder, or for an acquittal in either case—on the plea of allowing the prisoners the benefit of the doubt. Pereira's murderers are in our opinion a far more detestable class of people than the Little Hongkong assassins. The crime of the former was perpetrated, if we are to trust eye-witnesses, under the most distressing circumstances. The turnkey was brutally attacked while in the exercise of his duty; the escaped convicts did all they could to master him; caused him to fall overboard; when the poor man was struggling in the sea they struck him with bamboo poles, and exactly in keeping with the barbarous practice adopted by heartless rogues, they kept on striking at him every time he appeared on the surface, until he appeared no more. On Pereira's body and head, if we remember aright, marks of violence were subsequently discovered, fully confirming the report given by eye-witnesses, that he had been struck both before and after he fell or was pitched into the sea. There was also the presumption against the prisoners, of determined attempt and effort to suppress the only element of opposition they had to contend with, in order to make good their escape, and the aggravating circumstance that they were undergoing various terms of imprisonment for previous misdeeds and crimes. In the Little Hongkong murder none of these circumstances obtained. The men were unknown to the Police; the assault and murder were perpetrated without any concomitant act of barbarity and it is quite possible that the intention of the prisoners was not to assassinate the inhabitant of the premises which they were bent on looting. The crime was perpetrated in the dead of night, and only one eye-witness, a boy, came forward to identify the perpetrators. We do not question the regularity of this identification. If a boy, a few days after witnessing a murderous assault on an individual, can pick out the parties concerned from among twelve other persons, he must be truthful, or smartly so, as Mr. Robinson, the counsel for the defence, put it. Yet, the whole evidence for the prosecution, barring the circumstantial proofs of the prisoners having been found in possession of the looted property and armed with sword and revolver, rested on this boy's identification. Taking into consideration the important fact that the prisoners were only part of a gang of thieves, who entered the house in Little Hongkong on the night of the murder, the question would still remain to be answered—were they or their associates the perpetrators of the murder? They may have been abettors in the crime of house-breaking and plundering, were they also abettors, in any, perpetrators of the murder? The answer given to this question is the boy's identification which was considered to be sufficient ocular testimony to convict the prisoners. Was there any want of ocular testimony in Pereira's murder? Certainly not. There was, as Chief Justice remarked, a certain degree of conflict in the evidence, which has probably been considered by the jury to be sufficient ground on which to acquit the prisoners by allowing them the benefit of the doubt. If the benefit of the doubt is such an elastic thing as to be capable of indefinite extension, then we think it should have been fully applied to the Little Hongkong murderers. Both cases stand, we think, on an equal footing, either a verdict of guilty should have been returned in both, or the prisoners concerned in both should have been acquitted.

Our Fochow contemporary is informed that the recent troubles in Formosa originated in consequence of the *Libin* runners collecting in "squeezes" double the amount demanded by the tariff.

At a Convocation of Emergency of the Amoy Chapter, No. 1781, held on Saturday the 24th inst. the following Companions were elected as Office bearers for the ensuing year:—

M. F. Z...	M. E. Comp.	F. W. Bruce.
H...	"	W. C. Howard.
Scribe E...	"	B. N. Jenkins.
N...	"	J. G. Gbits.
Treasurer...	"	G. C. Lewis, P.Z.
P. S...	"	T. W. Wright.
Steward...	"	W. Wilson.
Janitor...	"	H. J. Wood.

The *Sinh Pao* has the following from a gentleman residing at the Pingto mines, in Shantung, concerning the recent workings of the mine:—Last year a quantity of material was dug out which was supposed to be pure gold ore, but was afterwards discovered to be a species of iron pyrites, with a limited admixture of gold and silver. In the month of April, 1887, samples of these diggings, which had been washed by hand labour, were sent to the Union Iron Works of San Francisco for examination and analysis, and the result showed that out of one ton of the diggings, gold and silver to the value of 713 dollars, U.S. currency, were extracted. Subsequently, in June of the same year, samples of the same diggings, which had been washed by machinery, were brought to Tientsin, and submitted to the Viceroys' mining engineer, Mr. J. Church, for analysis. He discovered that in every ton of the ore there were 15 ounces of gold and over 30 ounces of silver. These figures show that the value of the ore from the mine is of limited value, and unless the operations during the coming winter develop better results, the prospects of the mine are not over bright.

In nothing is the sound commonsense of the Chinese Government more clearly shown than in the sale of official rank, when any great emergency arises requiring money. Official rank, so-called, is purely honorary; it is a mere name without any practical significance whatever. But since the Government next to nothing, and yet they form a never-failing source of revenue. The Governor of Kiangsi reports in the *Peking Gazette* that Tls. 54,424 were realised in his province from the sale of official rank during the first seven months of the present year, of which Tls. 23,070 were remitted to Shantung for re-voicing the bed of the Yellow River in that province, and Tls. 18,354 were sent to Hongkong for repair of the breach at Chien Chong. During subsequent months he had sold 108 official titles, for which a sum of Tls. 12,679 were received and placed in the Treasury pending the receipt of instructions from the Board as to its disposal. The Viceroy of Sechuan and the Governor of Formosa send in similar reports. During the seventh month of the present year, the former had sold over fifty appointments and realised Tls. 3,465 while in Formosa the proceeds from the same source during the first four months of the year amounted to Tls. 6,236.

We find the following in the *Times* of the 22nd ult.:—In the last past report from the British Consular Agent at Sandakan, the capital of British North Borneo, reference is made to the planting of tobacco in this new territory. The cultivation of "wrap" tobacco has proved exceedingly lucrative in Sumatra, where some of the leading companies pay dividends of over 100 per cent, and in one case 152 per cent. was paid in 1886. The tobacco combines quality with elasticity and extreme thinness, so that the leaf covers a large number of cigars. The value attached to it may be judged from the fact that while the price of ordinary smoking tobacco is about 5d. per lb., wholesale and in bond "wrap" fetches from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. On the other hand, the cultivation is attended by unusual risks and very heavy expenses, and it was long thought that the peculiar conjunction of soil and climate necessary for its production was confined to Sumatra. But experiments have shown that it can also be grown in British North Borneo. Samples from there were highly recommended at the Colonial and India Exhibition, and suitable land for the purpose is being eagerly taken up, chiefly by Dutch planters. Most of the capital employed and of the European engaged are Dutch, because hitherto the production of "wrap" tobacco has been almost entirely a Dutch industry carried on in Dutch colonies. One of the principal reasons for the Dutch purchasing tobacco lands outside their own colonies is the very heavy taxation to which they are subjected by their own Government. In Java the planter has to pay coolie poll-taxes, a licence tax, high railway charges, export and many other dues, and in addition has to pay yearly a tax on his land which would bore him, on an average, 500 years' lease in North Borneo, where the tax is only 10 per cent. on the value of the land, except those on opium, spirit, and the like. Hence the Dutch are not only protecting the country for tobacco, but also for sugar, coffee, and other cultivation.

MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

A meeting of the Legislative Council was held this afternoon. There were present: His Excellency the Acting Governor (Dr. F. Stewart), Mr. O'Malley, Attorney-General, Mr. H. E. Wodehouse, Acting Colonial Treasurer, Captain W. M. Deane, Superintendent of Police, Messrs. J. Bell-Irving, B. Layton, and Wong Sing. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. THE CONSOLIDATION OF LOCAL ORDINANCES. The Attorney-General, in moving the second reading of the Chinese Emigration Consolidation Ordinance of 1888, said that as that was the first of a batch of Consolidated Ordinances, and some time had elapsed since the last batch was before Council, he would like to say a word or two with reference to the scope of the Ordinance, especially as he thought some misapprehension as to their object existed. That was one of a number of Consolidated Bills which had been introduced by the Law Revision Committee. The intention of the Committee was to collect into one Ordinance all the subject-matter scattered through the various collections of the Colony, so as to exhibit the existing law in a convenient form for reference, and make it easily understood by people other than lawyers. With each of the Consolidated Ordinances a schedule would be presented which was formed by the Commission to show what they were quoting from. They required no amendment, it having been carefully provided, at the request that no change must be made. To illustrate this he read a schedule, and an extract from the *Times* on the subject, which showed the necessity for passing Consolidated Ordinances, without debate, simply accepting them as a concrete form of law. The Acting Colonial Treasurer seconded Mr. Layton, said he had great pleasure in being desirable that the question of Consolidated Ordinances should be brought before the Chamber of Commerce before the Bill was passed, as many clauses passed heavily on various people. He asked if it was the intention of the Governor to introduce a Consolidated Ordinance, he would be glad to see it.

that the question could be discussed by the mercantile community.

The Acting Governor said that it was the Governor's intention to do so shortly, but pointed out that in the present Bill no new legislation had been introduced.

Mr. Layton continued that there were many clauses in it which needed revision, and that the Chamber of Commerce, which he represented, desired that they should be allowed to participate in that revision.

The Acting Governor assured him that everything would be done when the amending Ordinance was introduced to throw a light on the Chinese emigration question. In the Consolidated Bill before them there was nothing at all new.

The Attorney-General pointed out that the Law Revision Commission could not introduce new matter, having no power to do so. The subject of Chinese emigration was a serious one and everyone was anxious to get it settled. The present law pressed heavily on both Chinese and foreigners.

The Acting Governor said that before long the Chamber of Commerce and any other body would have the fullest opportunity of criticising the question.

On the motion of the Attorney-General the Bill was referred to a select Committee consisting of himself, the Acting Colonial Treasurer, Mr. J. Bell-Irving, and Mr. Layton.

The rest of the business was of a routine nature.

THE CURIOUS SMUGGLING CASE.

The adjourned hearing of the case of alleged smuggling of ninety balls of opium was up before Mr. Wodehouse again this morning.

The interpreter stated that the books of the shop from which the opium was got showed that 250 chests had been sold in seven months, the defendants having bought thirty chests at about twenty different periods. Some of the opium was prepared.

Mr. Hastings desired to make an explanation about what had been said by one of the defendants at the last hearing, to the effect that he told him not to acknowledge the opium, as he might be fined \$100,000 or \$200,000.

His Worship asked for whom he appeared.

Mr. Hastings replied that he appeared for the lessee of the Opium Farm—he did not remember the name.

His Worship suggested that he should ask the Opium Farm manager what the name was.

Mr. Hastings preferred to get it from the man himself. In the meantime he desired to make his explanation.

His Worship insisted on knowing his client's name first.

Mr. Hastings urged that the Court might be adjourned before he got to know.

His Worship:—Well, I can't allow you to address me until I know your standing here.

Mr. Hastings:—My name has been mentioned in the case, and I wish you to allow me to make a statement.

His Worship:—No, I cannot.

Mr. Hastings:—Your Worship, I think I have a status here.

His Worship:—You can give evidence if you like.

Mr. Hastings:—But I think it is not material to the case; my name has been mentioned and I wish to explain the circumstances under which it occurred.

His Worship:—You may get into the witness-box if you like.

Mr. Hastings:—I will get into the box if you wish.

His Worship:—Very well, you may get into the box.

Mr. Hastings then entered the box and made the following statement:—I am a solicitor, and am clerk to Messrs. Wotton and Deacon. On the 21st inst. I was instructed to appear for the first two defendants. I went up to the Gaol to take their statements, and was accompanied by Ng Shan Kwong and another man. I took their statements through the interpreter. I did not tell either defendant not to acknowledge that he got the opium at the Sui Kee shop, or anything of the kind, nor anything about his being fined. I am not acquainted with Chinese, and do not know what was said by the men with me. I was afterwards instructed to watch the case for the lessee of the Opium Farm, by Ng Shan Kwong, and ceased to act for the defendants. I have been informed of the name of the lessee, but I am not sure of it.

His Worship:—Well, what name do you think it was?

Mr. Hastings preferred not to mention it, for fear it was not the right man.

His Worship:—Why should you object?

Mr. Hastings:—I have no definite knowledge, but the name I heard was Ng Shan Po. I don't know whether he is the man or not.

His Worship asked Mr. Spooner if he knew whether that was the name or not.

Mr. Spooner said he did not know. He thought Mr. Hastings appeared for the Sui Kee shop.

His Worship:—You certainly gave me to understand that you appeared for the Opium Farm, and I should like to know definitely.

Mr. Hastings then left the Court, and on his return re-entered the box. His evidence having been translated he resumed his seat and said that he appeared for Ng Shan Po.

In answer to an inquiry

Mr. Caldwell said that he watched the case on behalf of the Opium Farmer, but was not so good the Court, only as anybody else.

Mr. Johnson left the case in the hands of the Court.

His Worship said:—The defendants have been found guilty of the possession of ninety balls of raw opium without a certificate of purchase from the licensee, and without an official export permit. The case from the commencement was perfectly clear against them, and their solicitor's account bearing at once pleaded guilty and made no further defence. Of course the defence they desired to make was that they were acting as servants; and really did not know they were breaking the law, so that the blame rested with the persons who entrusted them with the money. That introduced an element into the case which has elicited an amount of mis-statement and false swearing on the part of those who ought to have known better that has seldom come before the notice of this Court, and it is quite clear that there has been every effort made to keep back information as to the facts of the case, and to keep it from those who have been endeavoring to keep it back. The only person in this Colony who is allowed to have raw opium in his possession without the usual conditions attaching to it is the Opium Farmer. The defence said it was from the Opium Farmer they obtained the opium, and it was added that they were going to smuggle it into China. Whether that is so or not is not for me to say, but of course it is impossible for me to overlook the kind of evidence that has been given, both by the shopmen from whom they say they got the opium and the representative of the Opium Farmer, which was contradictory of the evidence given by the defendants, and contained nothing at all to which I can attach the idea that it was true. What their object could be in telling stories of this kind of course I can only conjecture. But I can only say that effect it produced on all who heard it must have been prejudicial. Even supposing the story to be true it can attach no value to it without credible evidence to support it. I might consider it true, but in order to exonerate the defendants I must be proved that the evidence given by the shopmen and the Opium Farmer was false.

prove that the opium was sold described himself as the master of the Sui Kee shop, but they themselves had said that he was telling a falsehood—that he was not the master, and indeed it was ridiculous to suppose that he really was. It is utterly unlikely that a man of that kind, with important interests, would be entrusted with them when he is unable to read or write a single word. But the defendants must be the sufferers for that. They have failed to prove their defence, and all I can deal with is the fact that they were found with the opium and were unable to give a proper account of how they got it. I consider it a very bad case indeed—they were in a boat, trying to evade the Customs—in fact the very reason they were discovered was because they were acting in a suspicious manner as to draw attention to themselves. As the people whom they called their principals decline to come forward and speak the truth I must deal with them as the principals. The first and second defendants, who had charge of the opium, would be fined \$1000 each, or three months' imprisonment, and the other two, the b'atmen, would be fined \$250, or one month's imprisonment. The opium was to be confiscated.

A NIGHT WITH THE AMERICAN MUSICAL COMEDY AND OPERA COMPANY.

The members of the American Musical Comedy and Opera Company have never been seen to less advantage than they were at the Theatre Royal, City Hall, last night. For some reason which we are quite unable to fathom, the opera was badly staged and dressed, while both the singing and acting were, with the single exception of Mr. Charles Fisher, far below par. There were apparently no "supers" available, so that the entire population of an imaginary village consisted of Meadames Vera Patey, Gracie Whitford, Flo Morrison and Nellie Cripps. From the rise of the curtain to its fall it was painfully apparent that "The Sorcerer" had been insufficiently rehearsed, and that, moreover, its adequate representation was beyond the available strength of the Company. Unfortunately for the performers of last night, "The Sorcerer," thoroughly well put on the stage, had been most ably represented last season by the members of the Hongkong Choral Society, and a comparison between the two shows could not possibly be avoided. Our local amateurs are, with two or three brilliant exceptions, anything but flyers in the operative line of business, but in "The Sorcerer" musical knowledge, careful and long continued rehearsal, a powerful chorus, and a capital *mise en scene* enabled them to come off with flying colours, whereas last night's representation was very little short of a ghastly failure. But even analysing the two different casts, amateur and professional, the amateurs in every instance, excepting *Alzira*, more than held their own. We would recommend the management of the American Musical Comedy and Opera Company, either to devote some time and attention to properly getting up "The Sorcerer" for stage representation or to wipe it clean off their repertoire.

We can only allude very briefly to last night's performance in detail. By far and away the best played part in the opera was the *Alzira* of Mr. C. Fisher. His acting was of a spirited character throughout and he sang in his very best form, which is saying a good deal. *Alzira* is an officer of the Grenadier Guards, but Mr. Fisher was a hybrid of a soldier, which certainly is not known in the British Army. The fagged and profusely ornamented tunic and cap which he wore reminded us forcibly of *Nepomuc* in the "Grand Duchess" and that other equally silly military swell in "The Bohemian Girl," but in no sense was the get-up appropriate, and in a matter of this kind we venture to think that it ought to have been. Miss Hare as *Alma* and Miss Eva Leamington as *Lady Sangarosa* both sang effectively, although the first lady's voice at times displayed signs of fatigue, and it is certainly losing its volume, owing, we assume, to incessant hard work. We won't on this occasion be "unduly" and "insulting" to Mr. H. M. Immo, who appeared as *Don Diego*. It will be sufficient to say that this gentleman, buried in "Colonial gloom," was "quite out of sorts and not up to the part, and to suggest that before again attempting it he should scrape acquaintance with Mr. C. H. Grace—the *Dr. Daly* of the Choral Society—over a friendly "last" and take advantage of a few hints both in acting and singing. We were greatly pained to see Mr. Sutcliffe, hopelessly struggling with such an ungenial part as that of *Sir Marmaduke Poldark*. It is always disagreeable to have to say unkind things about an undertaking, but of ability like Mr. Sutcliffe, there is no denying the fact that his *Sir Marmaduke* looked like a flunkey and acted like a ploughman. Mr. John P. Sheridan's *John Willington Wells* was a ridiculous travesty of the character, totally unlike anything ever previously seen on the local stage. Of course Mr. Sheridan is a consummate artist, an actor of a thousand; but he can't play the Cockney commercial traveller in "The Sorcerer"—or, at all events, he did not do so last night, and he was not "letter" perfect. A good deal must be said for Mr. Phil Ray's artistic rendering of the small part of the *Notary*. Miss Whitford was passable as *Constance*, but Miss Vera Patey was quite out of her element as the old dowager—the she did not appear able to grasp the character of Mrs. Partridge. Next to Mr. Fisher the most successful member in the cast was Mr. J. A. Robertson, the able conductor, who did everything that mortal man could do to achieve a success that was impossible.

We have already expressed the opinion that the *force* of the professional artist now in our midst is in musical or comic comedy, and the accuracy of this view was clearly enough shown in last night's performance of *Sydney Grundy's* "Arabian Nights." Anything better in its way has never been seen on the Hongkong stage. As we criticised the previous representation of this most amusing of modern three-act farces in detail we need not now go over beaten ground. The weight of the performance falls chiefly on Mr. Willard as *Hammurabi*, Miss Gracie Whitford as *Rana Colomba*, and Mr. Sheridan as *Yousa Ghibbani*. Each and all of the three were just as good as they make them in these dramatic days, and the subordinate roles were especially Miss Leamington's *Ghibbani*, who were all capitally filled. The theatre resounded with hearty laughter throughout the whole three acts, and when the drop fell at a little after half past ten, we were left with no symptoms of weariness were visible.

We must not omit to add that there was a very full house, not that "Gibber" and "Sullivan" "Ruddiger" is undervalued to be a mere light comedy, but that it was a very good one.

THE REGATTA DEADLOCK.

I was exceedingly interested in the interesting communication published in yesterday's *Telegraph* and glad to hear that the question of boats and crews for the Regatta had been settled. The Irish, Danish, and German crews, which were the only ones who had not yet been decided upon, were now all in the hands of the Regatta Committee.

in the mainly pristine, and have never missed a Victoria Club Regatta since 1876; with these credentials, and as an old member of the Thames and West London Rowing Clubs, I may, without laying myself open to an accusation of vanity, claim to be something of an authority on matters aquatic. And it is in a true sportsmanlike spirit that I have investigated the existing difficulty which threatens to swamp our forthcoming Regatta, and now take the liberty of stating my views to the members of the V.R.C. and the community generally.

Major Ellis, the stroke of the English International crew, has had a boat specially built for the Regatta. It is exactly on the same lines as the ordinary Club boats, and, if anything, weighs a few pounds heavier. It was specially designed, I believe, to suit a very heavy man in the Military team, of which Major Ellis is stroke in all the races where they have entered. So far as I can ascertain this new boat is not in any respect an improvement on the Club craft; however, the Irish, Danish, and German crews object, and threaten to "scratch" unless the English take their chance in one of the old boats.

It seems to me that the objection of the Irish, Danish and German crews to Major Ellis's new boat is quite frivolous and cannot be upheld. In every important respect the boat is identical with those already in use, and I cannot find anything in the V.R.C. rules to prevent a stroke building a boat for himself and rowing in it at the Regatta—always providing that said boat meets the conditions of the race, in which it is used. In fact, precedent is all on the other side. I speak under correction, as I have not seen Mr. Woodin on the subject, but unless my memory serves me badly that veteran oarsman in years gone by invariably rowed in his own boats, which were built under his special instructions. If I am wrong Mr. Woodin will doubtless correct me, but I do not think I can possibly be mistaken. Again, some seven or eight years ago, Mr. J. Sampson, who was one of the leading English representatives and a first-class rower, had a boat specially constructed for the crews he was to "stroke" at the Regatta. That boat was named the *Lulu*, and doubtless she is still in existence.

From the foregoing paragraph it must be apparent to everybody that the objection of the German, Danish, and Irish crews to the new boat is not supported either by rule or precedent; it is therefore invalid. But this is really a matter which should be judged from the view of true sportsmanship rather than from any hard and fast rule. It is evident enough that Major Ellis is clearly entitled to race his new boat under the Club rules, and his position is strengthened by the precedents above quoted. On what tangle-ground then, may I fairly be asked, has this objection been lodged? I cannot find any ground, as no allegation has been made that the new boat differs in any material respect from the well tried old boats, which are a credit to the Club. The objectioners have therefore been actuated in raising this trouble by motives which, to say the least, are not sportsmanlike. Had an attempt been made to obtain an unfair advantage, a protest would certainly have been in order, but no such assertion has been advanced.

I regret that two of the objecting boats fly foreign flags. The Victoria Recreation Club is a British institution in a British colony, but it can justly claim to have held out the right hand of good fellowship in relation to the encouragement of many sports to all nationalities. And hitherto goodwill and harmony have almost universally prevailed. Candidly speaking, do these Danish and German gentlemen consider that they are advancing the interests of the V.R.C. or promoting the success of the forthcoming Regatta, by indulging in untenable objections, and threatening to withdraw their support? Surely not! I have always held a much higher opinion of the many qualities of our German and Danish neighbours. The action of the Irish crew, or rather of their stroke, Mr. Rochfort, who is a griffin in this colony and can know nothing about the recognised practice, is altogether beyond my comprehension. I understand that the other two boats are perfectly satisfied with the decision of

